



James L. Oberstar

H. CON. RES. ____, THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 6, 2008

I am extremely pleased that the fiscal year (FY) 2009 Budget Resolution, approved by the Committee on the Budget, recognizes the critical importance of meeting our nation's infrastructure investment needs, even while achieving a balanced budget by 2012. The Budget Resolution vigorously rejects the short-sighted policies of the President's budget, which cuts virtually every infrastructure investment program within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, including highways, public transit, airports, Amtrak, wastewater treatment, and water resources development.

In contrast to the harmful cuts proposed by the administration, the resolution fully funds highway, transit, and highway safety programs at the levels originally authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The resolution rejects both the negative \$1 billion adjustment for Revenue Aligned Budget Authority, and the administration's proposal to cut highway and transit funding by an additional \$1 billion below the authorized levels, which would be detrimental to short-term economic stimulus efforts, as well as long-term economic growth.

For the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), the resolution rejects the \$765 million cut proposed by the administration, and instead provides the full amounts authorized in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881), as approved by the House last year. Specifically, the proposed budget provides \$3.9 billion for AIP in FY 2009, increasing to \$4.1 billion by FY 2011. This funding will allow the AIP program to keep pace with inflationary cost increases, and begin to address the investment gap in airport safety and capacity needs.

For Amtrak, the resolution rejects the \$525 million cut proposed by the administration, which would essentially shut-down our national passenger rail system, and instead increases funding to meet the costs of Amtrak's new labor agreement, pursuant to Presidential Emergency Board 242.

For environmental infrastructure, the resolution rejects the administration's proposed cut to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, the primary Federal program for funding wastewater infrastructure projects throughout the nation. A year ago, the President requested \$687.5 million in capitalization grants for CWSRFs for FY 2008. At that time, it was the lowest level requested by any administration since the creation of the program. For FY 2009, the administration requests a pitiful \$555 million, a 20 percent cut from last year's appropriation of \$689 million. The administration's proposal puts at risk the water quality gains achieved in recent decades, and the resolution correctly rejects this cut.

Finally, the resolution rejects the administration's proposal to cut funding for the Army Corps of Engineers by \$845 million in FY 2009, and instead provides increased funding to begin to

address the growing backlog of water resources development projects, including those authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 2007.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure firmly believes that infrastructure investment is fundamental to stimulating and sustaining long-term economic growth. Therefore, I am pleased that the budget resolution includes an Infrastructure Investment Reserve Fund, which will accommodate legislation to "Rebuild America" in FY 2009.

I look forward to working with Chairman Spratt on continued improvements to our nation's infrastructure, and I urge my colleagues to support the resolution.